

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EG, UR
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN MEDIA ON USSR SINCE FAHMY-GROMYKO TALKS

SUMMARY: SINCE THE FAHMY/GROMYKO MEETING IN MOSCOW,
BITTERNESS AND VOLUME OF ANTI-SOVIET ATTACKS HAS DECREASED
SHARPLY IN EGYPTIAN PRESS. COMMENTATORS REVEAL, HOWEVER,
STRONG SKEPTICISM ABOUT LIKELIHOOD ANY STEP TOWARDS
NORMALIZATION, EMPHASIZING THAT EGYPT IS EMPHATICALLY
A NON-ALIGNED STATE. PIN PRICKS OF CRITICISM
CONTINUE TO BE PUBLISHED. END SUMMARY

1. AS ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL, BITTERLY ANTI-SOVIET
OBSERVATIONS IN THE PRESS AND IN SPEECHES BY SENIOR GOE
OFFICIALS WERE COMMON PRIOR TO FAHMY/GROMYKO TALKS IN
MOSCOW JUNE 8-9. BITTERNESS AND VOLUME OF ANTI-SOVIET
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PROGAGANDA HAS DECREASED SHARPLY SINCE FAHMY'S RETURN,
BUT STRONG SKEPTICISM ABOUT LIKELIHOOD OF CONCRETE RESULTS
LEADING TO NORMALIZATION IS EVIDENT. AS EGYPTIAN MARXIST
WRITER POINTED OUT YEARS OF INTENSE MUTUAL VITUPERATION
MAKE IMPROVEMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS VERY DIFFICULT.

2. SKEPTICISM. ARTICLES WRITTEN BY EGYPTIAN JOURNALISTS

WHO ACCOMPANIED FAHMY TO MOSCOW ARE COURTEOUS, BUT PESSIMISTIC. AKHBAR'S DIPLOMATIC EDITOR SAID EGYPTIANS ARE "PUZZLED AND CONCERNED" AND ARE EXPERIENCING "FEELINGS SIMILAR TO REJECTION" WITH REGARD ANY "TENDENCY RETURN TO MOSCOW." EGYPTIANS STILL SUBCONSCIOUSLY ATTRIBUTE THEIR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CALAMITIES TO THEIR ALLIANCE WITH SOVIETS, SHE OBSERVES. MOST COMMENTATORS EMPHASIZE THAT EGYPT IS NON-ALIGNED STATE AND THAT IT WILL BE "A LONG TIME" BEFORE "ANYTHING HAPPENS." GUMHURIYYA'S DIPLOMATIC EDITOR EXPRESSES IMPLICIT DISAPPROVAL OF FACT THAT SOVIETS ARE REQUIRING AMELIORATION OF THE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP AS PREREQUISITE FOR IMPROVEMENT OF FINANCIAL, MILITARY, CULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS.

3. SENIOR GOE OFFICIALS ECHO SAME LINE VP MUBARAK IN LIBREVILLE JUNE 15 REPORTEDLY SAID THAT NO SOLUTIONS HAD BEEN REACHED WITH THE SOVIETS. FAHMY SAID ON TV JUNE 17 "SOVIETS DESIRE IMPROVE RELATIONS" BUT STRESSED NORMALIZATION DOES NOT IMPLY SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP AND OBSERVED POINTEDLY THAT EGYPT HAS AN IMPORTANT POSITION WHICH SOVIETS MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.

4. WHO MAKES FIRST MOVE? AKHBAR EDITOR ASKED GROMYKO AT MOSCOW AIRPORT WHO IS EXPECTED TO TAKE FIRST STEP, TO WHICH GROMYKO ANSWERED BOTH SHOULD ACT AT SAME TIME. EGYPTIAN JOURNALIST RESPONDED THAT AS A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUPERPOWER, USSR SHOULD MAKE FIRST GESTURE. LOCAL PAPERS REPORT AIRPORT EXCHANGE ANGERED GROMYKO WHO COMPLAINED EGYPTIAN JOURNALISTS SEEKING "CRUCIFY HIM".

5. CRITICISM CONTINUES. SADAT HAS PUBLICLY CRITICIZED SOVIETS SINCE RETURN OF FAHMY. INSTALLMENT OF HIS MEMOIRS IN JUNE 19 OCTOBER MAGAZINE INCLUDES STATEMENT THAT THOSE BEHIND RIOTS WERE "SOVIET AGENTS". AHAM HAD JUNE 18 ARTICLE ON USSR AFTER 60 YEARS OF REVOLUTION WHICH WAS ENTIRELY NEGATIVE: CONSUMERS STILL IN LONG QUEUES, FOREIGNERS' MOVEMENTS RESTRICTED, SOVIETS 20 YEARS BEHIND WEST AND CHILDREN DRILLED IN CANT THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND. BREZHNEV'S ELECTION TO PRESIDENCY (IN PLACE OF PODGORNYY WHO HIGHLY UNPOPULAR WITH SADAT) IS SUBJECT STRAIGHT REPORTING, BUT NO COMMENTARY. JUNE 12 OCTOBER MAGAZINE ATTRIBUTED UNREASONABLY LARGE SIZE OF SOVIET EMBASSY IN KHARTOUM TO SOVIET PLANS FOR "ESPIONAGE AND SABOTAGE." COMMENTING ON LEBANESE REPORT THAT SENIOR SOVIET ENVOY MAY COME TO ME AT SAME TIME AS SECRETARY VANCE, GUMHURIYYA JUNE 12 OBSERVES ACIDLY THAT LEBANESE SOURCE DID NOT REVEAL WHETHER ENVOY'S TASK TO BE TO COORDINATE WITH VANCE OR TO UNDERMINE HIS MISSION.

6. WHY DID FAHMY GO? TWO COMMENTATORS SUGGEST LIKUD VICTORY PRODDERD BOTH SIDES INTO UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WAS IN THEIR INTEREST TO ALLEVIATE TENSION. EGYPTIAN MARXIST WRITER SALAH HAFEZ IMPLIES THAT FAHMY, NOT SADAT, WAS PROMOTOR OF VISIT.

7. COMMENT: FAHMY, SADAT AND PRESS HAVE REGISTERED LITTLE OPTIMISM ABOUT LIKELIHOOD OF "CONCRETE MEASURES" WHICH JOINT COMMUNIQUE ALLEGED ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION. IT WOULD APPEAR, HOWEVER, THAT GOE WILL TAKE PUBLIC STANCE OF QUALIFIED SATISFACTION IN HOPE GROMYKO WILL BRING SOMETHING SUBSTANTIAL WHEN AND IF HE ARRIVES IN CAIRO, AN EVENT WHICH FAHMY TOLD PRESS WOULD OCCUR IN AUGUST. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THERE IS AN UNUSUAL INTROSPECTIVE THEME BY MAJOR COMMENTATORS WHO WRITE LESS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND MORE ABOUT EGYPTIAN NATIONAL PRIDE AND SELF-RELIANCE, WITH OCCASIONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF SOVIETS' HEAVY HANDEDNESS IN THEIR DAYS OF ASCENDENCY IN UAR. EILTS

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